

## Athenian News :

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## Dunton's Oracle.

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 From Tuesday May the 2d, to Saturday May the 6th, 1710.
 

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*The Sibil-Post, or Ideal Kingdom, being a new and mysterious Discovery made for the Use of the Ladies; to be continu'd in Dunton's Oracle, 'till all the Colonies are planted.*

**I** Never fail'd giving Attendance in the Walk where the *Sibil* us'd to be, whither she soon came, and after commending my Diligence, she proceeded to tell me,

The Colony of *Noble Fancy* was planted in a fruitful, pleasant and large Island. This Place the mighty Monarch had wholly destinated to the Pleasure and Improvement of the Nobility, but chiefly those that were born so. He was curious in the Choice of a Governour, who was to have the Title of *Vice-Roy*, in Respect to the Design of that Colony, which was the Embellishment of Honour and Nobility, who would be defective in Politeness without a Court; but nothing was harder to find than a Person fit for that Honour. To chuse one from amongst the Nobility in the same Colony was liable to many Exceptions, all having equal Pretensions to it; for Persons of high Rank and Quality are great Strangers to their own Merits, never getting any Sight of what they are, but in the Glasses of Adulation; so that every one had higher Thoughts of his own Perfections than the rest would allow: But by strange good Fortune, a Person proper for that Honour was at last found in a remote Part of the World, where Nobility had been rais'd to its highest Exaltation, insomuch that most of the inferior People were scarce thought worthy to behold 'em; so that this Person, by the Homage which was paid to Greatness in that Place, had contracted a Habit of expecting it, which gave him a high Air and noble Mien, that he was acknowledg'd by all the judicious every Way worthy of that high Station, a magnificent Palace was prepar'd for him, and all usual Marks of Honour and Respect for his Reception, was paid him by as many of the Nobility design'd for that Colony, as were already arriv'd. He had a great Council chosen and appointed by the high Monarch, who should receive and send out his Orders, as there might be Occasion.

His first Order was, That all the Nobility from their Cradles should be well instructed, to make a true Esti-

mate of the Privilege and Advantage a Noble Birth gives 'em, that they ought to know and believe that all Perfections, both of Body and Mind, are no where found but in noble Blood, and that they are made of a much finer Mold than others of inferior Rank, born to no other Felicity but of having a robust Body, able to endure Hardship for their Honour, to serve them and receive their Favours. After this the *Vice-Roy* humbly represented to the mighty Monarch the Necessity for a Grant of great and ample Revenues, to support the Dignity of those who had effectually receiv'd his Instructions, for that was the only Way to experience the Truth of what they were taught to know and believe. This was no sooner obtain'd, but the Colony was croud'd every where with People of all Ranks and Faculties, in Hopes of advancing themselves in Dignity, Riches and Reputation, from the Honour of being employ'd in the Service of Persons of high Quality. The *Vice-Roy's* Lady soon after arriv'd a Lady of the most refin'd Fancy in dressing and adjusting, to a most astonishing Degree of Beauty. She furnish'd her Appartment, which was very magnificent, with all that could possibly attract the Eyes of the curious. She brought in her Retinue a great Number of Persons exceedingly qualify'd, to attend and receive her Orders, who had little Occasion to eat, drink, or sleep, they were so well sustain'd with the Honour of her Service. She was perfectly devoted to the Nicety of Cleanness, that her Servants can commit no Crime so great as to omit, on the most pressing Occasion, that Labour, Care and Diligence she strictly requires, of keeping all Things in their Charge in its first Lustre, perfectly new. This Oeconomy so exact, employ'd so much Time and Thought it would not admit of her publick Appearance every Day, but only Three Days in a Week. One Day she entertains with *Musick*, in which Men of Quality are oblig'd to meet the Ladies, to give and receive the Pleasure of mutual Glances, to qualify the Seriousness *Musick* is apt to set upon their Faces; and sometimes, for Variety, 'tis a *Ball*, but when 'tis an *Opera*, she has Tickets given out to exclude all but those she is sure will be clean and well dress'd, for she abhors the Sight of those that are not exact in that Point. Another Day she assigns for *Cards*, from which no Ladies can absent without the Danger of being thought to want Money; or what's as ill, to be defective in that Skill or Address requir'd to the graceful Management of that Diversion which must needs proceed from a very mean



mean Degree of Wit, or Education. The Third Day is wholly dedicated to *Conversation*, and happy is that Lady that can bring into that Circle a pleasant Relation of the Disappointment of some aspiring Citizen's Wife, or other inferior Person, aiming above their Rank: But besides this agreeable Part of the *Conversation*, the great Lady approves of the discoursing of Modes and Dressing, and declares on that Occasion her Dislike, or Approbation, and what she commends is the establish'd Mode, during her Pleasure; for at the next Meeting she declares anew, both for her own Diversion and for the most necessary Expence of Time, so sad a Burden upon great Ladies.

The *Vice-Roy*, as forward to perform his Part, makes a new Order, that as all the Nobility, by Privilege of Birth, are allow'd to follow their own Inclinations, that no Person presume to contradict 'em on any Occasion; but *Tailors* and *Peruke-makers*, and other necessary Trades, shall have free Leave to impose upon 'em, so they do it with respectful Pretences, without Objection; for nothing lessens a great Man so much as to be contradicted, for they ought to know the Privilege of being always in the Right belongs to them.

This Order was presently follow'd by another of as much Moment. The *Vice-Roy* perceiving how soon a vast Revenue is consum'd in keeping up the Dignity of Greatness, he made this necessary Order, That the Nobility should spend none of their Revenue upon discharging Tradesmen's Bills, or paying Servant's Wages, who were sufficiently paid in the Honour of serving them; but for those Expences absolutely requir'd to satisfy their Passions and Inclinations, they must be sure to be provided, for there they must be magnificent for the Honour of their Quality. This Order, design'd in their Favour, cost 'em dear, and forc'd 'em to have Recourse to some Arts that should bring in Money, since their Birth and Quality had condemn'd 'em to such dreadful Expence, that for their Glory in raising others, they pull'd themselves down. This Consideration alone was the Source of all Games of Hazard, the only Thing that could be rely'd on for Money, which they apply'd to Night and Day, and follow'd with a Diligence surmounting all Obstacles; and for the same Intent, *Tennis-balls*, *Race-horses*, and *Cock fighting*, which often brought in Money, a Means the most consistent with Honour, besides the Advantage of spending Time, and giving Pleasure and Diversion, which yet amus'd 'em to such a Degree, the first Design was so little thought on they never perceiv'd how much it exhausted, rather than encreas'd their Riches; which was a Misfortune which sensibly touch'd the unmarried Ladies of the Nobility, who for want of Fortune could not hope to please themselves and marry in their own Rank, for if any of 'em were so unhappy to please one of those who were by Interest oblig'd to please their Parents, should they venture to marry that Person 'twould be to half murder themselves, and make an Uproar in the Family. To see Things at this Pass prov'd a sensible Mortification to the *Vice-Roy*, who was much better at raising Honour to the highest Pitch, than at finding out a Remedy for the Mischiefs that attend it, which put a Necessity upon him to represent to the

mighty Monarch the dangerous State the Colony was in, that unless the Nobility's Revenues were much augmented, they would soon be disabl'd from keeping up the Honour and Dignity they are born to, which appears in that those Men who they had made their greatest Favourites and Companions for the Address they shew'd of heightning the Pleasures of their Passions and Inclinations, were now apt to despise and insult 'em; and which was worse, made Pretensions to those unhappy Ladies that lay under those Difficulties of Marriage, and that which gave 'em Access, was their having every one a Confident of their Waiting-woman, who by intimate Acquaintance with the Players, and by seeing and reading Plays, were of so refin'd a Conversation there wanted no Pretence of being pleas'd with them, to cover a Design upon their Ladies; and therefore he humbly conceiv'd the banishing those Men and making a new Grant to encrease those Lords Revenues, was the only Remedy for those Evils. The great Monarch, somewhat mov'd at this Proposal, was heard to say, as airy a Thing as Honour was thought to be, he plainly saw it requir'd what was solid to support it, therefore could not approve the carrying it so high, for such an exorbitant Fancy destroys it self; and now perceiving he had taken wrong Measures in the Choice of a *Vice-Roy*, he recall'd him, and sent in his Place Four Merchants who were vastly rich, with Authority to act for the Good of that Colony, and many other rich Merchants who had been great Venturers into far Countries, and Men of great Experience came with 'em, and brought a great Number of *Negro's*. They were receiv'd with much Joy by all the Colony, only the Nobility were at some Loss what Degree of Respect they ought to have from them, 'till 'twas publickly declar'd they only obey'd the great Monarch's Order, which should be sent 'em upon every Occasion; yet the Disrespect those great Men had for this new Way of Government, appear'd in their Looks, which might have discourag'd the Merchants, had they not imputed it to another Cause; for, seeing them perfectly haunted by Tradesmen for their Bills, it might well be expected their Countenances should fall. This made 'em enquire into the publick Grievances, and found 'em to be chiefly the great Debts the Nobility were involv'd in, which had expos'd 'em to all the Troubles imaginable, not having it in their Power to give their Daughters Portions, to pay their Servant's Wages, or Tradesmen's Bills. This Grievance was represented to the great Monarch, humbly proposing the Redress, that if the Nobility would not disdain to marry their Daughters, they were able to give 'em such Portions as wou'd be equivalent to Quality, and do 'em more Service. The Proposal was so well receiv'd, that an Order was immediately issu'd out, that it should be no Lessening to the Nobility to marry below their Quality, where there are great Portions, for keeping at such a Distance is not so essential to Quality; they might be distinguish'd as well by looking big and speaking little, but supply it when more put to it, by taking Snuff out of a rich Snuff-box, and be always follow'd by a Train of *Negro's*, who require no Wages. This Method follow'd he question'd not in little Time to see the Flourishing of Noble Fancy.



## The Casuistical-Post, or Athenian Mercury.

**Q**uest. Mr. Dunton, tell me why God, having pardon'd David, would never vouchsafe him the Life of the Child he had by Bersheba, and I'll say your Athenian News deserves the Name of Oracle.

**Ans.** We know with what Fervency David pray'd, and desir'd the Life of that Child, but could never obtain it.

We ought here to observe an Effect of God's Wisdom. It might have been doubtful whether that Child was David's or not, for the Time of his Birth shew'd that he was then begotten when Uriah, the first Husband of Bersheba, was yet alive. Had that Child liv'd, being the first Son of David and Bersheba, he might have succeeded David in the Kingdom as well as Solomon, whom they had afterwards; but as his Birth might have been disputed, so his Title might have been call'd to Question, and it would have caus'd a great Trouble in the Royal Succession.

And altho' no Doubt had been made of his coming from David, yet being conceiv'd in Adultery, the Law made him incapable of the Crown; he might have had some Partizans, but he could not have wanted Competitors, arm'd with strong Reasons, and that would have occasion'd Civil Wars, which by the Death of that Child were prevented.

But there is yet a higher and more important Reason why God was not pleas'd that Child should live. Christ was to come from David and Bersheba, not indeed by their eldest Son, for our Lord is come from Nathan, who was but a younger Brother; but it was necessary, for many weighty Reasons, that Jesus Christ should be comprehended in the Genealogy of the eldest, because of the legal Succession which belong'd to Jesus Christ, the Line of the eldest failing; and from thence it comes, that St. Matthew, in his first Chapter, naming the Ancestors of Christ, makes him to come from Solomon. Now it was not fit that Christ should succeed, either naturally or legally, one of whom it might be doubted whether he came from David, or was his lawful Successor: And upon this Account was God pleas'd that that Child should die, (tho' the First-born) and that on the Seventh Day of his Nativity.

**Q.** Mr. Dunton, — Solomon's Fleet spent Three whole Years in a Voyage, which might have been perform'd in less than One Year; it is very likely that for want of a Sea-compass that Voyage was thus long; but why, Mr. Dunton, was not that Secret discover'd to Solomon? — Resolve this nice Question, and you'll much oblige Yours, T. M.

**A.** His Ships sail'd along the Mediterranean Sea, and so came into the main Ocean about Africa. The going and coming back, at this Day, would not take so much Time. They were then ignorant of the Use of the Needle touch'd with the Load-stone. Solomon himself, as great a Naturalist as he was, did not know it, and God was not pleas'd he should, for many Reasons.

First, God would not have his People should much apply themselves to Navigation, lest Israel should be corrupted by the Commerce to other Nations. And therefore of all the Tribes, only Three, viz. Zebulon, Issachar, and Aser, had their Habitations by the Seaside.

He would not have them neither to go far from the Land of Canaan, for many weighty Reasons.

Moreover, as to that natural Secret, God did reserve it to the latter Times, for the Discovery of the New World, which requir'd a longer Navigation, and consequently a more particular and constant Skill, than that of the Antiquity.

**Q.** Is the Body the Cause of sinful Inclinations?

**A.** Tho' Bodies, as the Objects of Thought, are as variable as the Thoughts upon them, yet it is evident that there are innumerable Objects of Thought, purely immaterial, and the little Mass of Stuff within the Cranium (nay, I add the whole Human Body) can't be so infinitely figur'd, or have its little Maggots friggle at such an infinite Rate, as to cause and produce such innumerable Variations as are made in Thoughts in a very short Time. But that which I would principally mind is, That if Thoughts resulted from the Figures and Motions of Matter in our Heads, or any other Parts, when God commands us to change our Thoughts, to love him, fear him, believe him, &c. from the contrary, he commands us to change the Figures, or Motions of some Particles of Matter or other, of which we are utterly ignorant, not knowing how many, what Shapes, what Dances must go to make up Love, or Hope, or Faith, &c. Nor are we able to effect those unknown Changes of Figures, or Motion, on God's Command. God commands me to love him, and fear him, and that presently. Can I change the Texture of my Blood, or Brains, into I know not what other Texture, in a Moment? or may I stay 'till I have dieted my self into a good Humour? But if none finds this Skill and Power, and if I can do nothing towards my Duty, where is Liberty, or Free-will, yea, or where is Duty, or where the wise and good Commander, of what I can do nothing to? Besides, the Badness of this material Hypothesis appears in this, That those Men that do hold it so fully, as to deny all Sins, and Duty, and so to assert an Indifference of all Actions, do yet much excuse themselves in Sin by the Supposition that their evil Inclinations to Anger, Lust, Discontent, &c. proceed from the Humours of the Body, that it is in their Nature to be angry, or lustful, or discontent, and so they can't help it; 'tis not, they think, from the Errors of their Understandings, and Selfishness of their Wills, that they are inclinable to these Evils, but from the abounding of Choler, or Blood, or the fancy'd melancholick Humour; and their Humours are what God has caus'd in them at first, and so they lay their Sins upon God; the Woman, or something or other, he gave them, is in the Fault, and makes them do amiss. Which could it be suppos'd consistent with the Divine Wisdom, and Goodness, God should not, to mend the Matter, have sent Prophets, and Apostles, to preach Repentance, and use Moral Persuasions to bring Men off their Sins, but should rather have rais'd up Physicians to reform Sinners, and have reveal'd a sufficient Number of Specificks to them, to purge out or change the Texture of all the Hamartiopoi-etick, or sinful Particles, Humours, or Masses in the Body. But I cannot pass this without denying the Supposition that something in the Body can be the Cause of Sin; for all those Appetites the Mind has by the Order of God in Nature on such or such natural Dispositions of the Body are good, and to be satisfy'd in their due Order; but it is the Self-will of Man that would satisfy them.



them how he pleases, without Regard to the Laws of his Maker, that is the Cause of Sin. It is necessary and good to have an Appetite to Food, in Order to stir up a Man to take in that which is adapted to supply the Defects of the Body, and an Inclination to the Business of Generation, to provoke him to what is necessary for propagating the Species of Man; but neither Appetite is the Cause of a Man's stealing, or wronging his Neighbour for its Satisfaction, or abusing himself in it, when he may more happily do it orderly. There may be a good Displeasure at Evil; but Anger, when sinful, has nothing but the Strength of Self-will for its Cause.

*Q. Why did the Son of God stay Four Days before he rais'd Lazarus from the dead?*

*A.* Among the Reasons of that Delay, this is very considerable; Christ was nigh his Death, but he had promis'd to rise the Third Day, and that was incredible, it being without an Example; for it had never happen'd, that a Body, dead Three Days before, had return'd to Life. None of those on whom such a Miracle had been done, had so long staid in the Condition of the dead, when God caus'd them to live again. Not the Son of the Widow of *Sarepta*, who was rais'd few Hours after he yielded up the Ghost; not the Son of the *Shunamite*, between whose Death and Resurrection there pass'd not a whole Day; not the Daughter of *Fairus*, lately expir'd when the Son of God rais'd her; not the young Man of *Naim*, whom they were going to bury; nor yet he who was thrown into the Sepulchre of *Elisba*. For it was not the Custom of *Israel* to keep dead Bodies long unbury'd, unless they were embalm'd; and the Heat of the Climate corrupted them presently, especially if they were kept above Three Days. But as to the young Man of *Naim*, and him whom they threw into the Sepulchre of *Elisba*, neither the Condition, which seems to have been but very mean, nor the Silence of the History, will not suffer us to say, they were embalm'd, no more than *Lazarus*, whose Corps stunk after the Fourth Day. Let us add thereunto, that if they had been kept to the Third Day, the Holy Ghost would never have serv'd to shew the more the Greatness of the Miracle, in that God should have rais'd some Corps that had been then so near putrify'd.

In a Word, Christ having foretold, that he would rise the Third Day from the dead, which as yet had never happen'd to any dead. He rais'd one that had been dead Four Days, to shew that he could very well raise one the Third Day, since he had rais'd one who had been a Day longer among the dead.

*Q. Is it never necessary to use unlawful Means?*

*A.* I answer, No, for the clearing whereof observe, that there is a Twofold Necessity.

First, *Necessitas rerum*, a Necessity of Riches, or an Estate, or of the Things of this World. Thus Tradesmen say, they cannot live and gain, except they deceive and lye: Thus poor Men say, they must steal and pilfer, otherwise they and their little ones must starve; but these must know there is no Necessity of sinning: Better gain little, than lose the Soul; better starve than steal.

Secondly, There is *Necessitas animæ*, a Necessity of the Soul, to preserve it from Sin, or to free it from Concu-

piscence: Thus *Lucretia* murder'd her self, because *Tarquin* had ravish'd her; and some kill themselves rather than they will be deflowr'd: But these must remember, that they pollute the Soul by one Sin, while they shun the Pollution of another; yea, it is themselves that contaminate their Souls, which were not defil'd by another's Fault. It was no Sin in *Lucretia* to be forc'd violently against her Will, (for that was *Tarquin's* Fault that ravish'd her, and in him a heinous Sin) but it was in her a notorious Sin, to kill her self. To conclude, *Vincit qui patitur*, Affliction is to be born, Temptations are to be withstood. (1.) By Prayer. (2.) By Watchfulness in them, and against them. (3.) By Hope and Expectation of the Divine Help and Assistance of God. But, (4.) Never by the Use of wicked or indirect Means.

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1. **A** Thenianism, or the New Projects of Mr. J. Dunton Author of the Essay entitl'd, The Hazard of a Death-Bed-Repentance, being Six Hundred distinct Treatises (in Prose and Verse) written with his own Hand, and is an entire Collection of all his Writings, both in Manuscript and such as were formerly printed: To which is added Dunton's Farewel to Printing, in some serious Thoughts on those Words of Solomon, Of making many Books there is no End, and much Study is a Weariness of the Flesh. Vol. I. with the Author's Effigies, to distinguish the original and true Copies from such as are false and imperfect. Take Care also of being cheated by Wooden Cuts, the right is that which is drawn and grav'd by those Two celebrated Artists Mr. Knight and Mr. Vander Gucht. To this Work is prefix'd an Heroick Poem upon Dunton's Projects, written by the Athenian Society, with an Alphabetical Table of the several Projects, Questions, Novelties, Poems and Characters inserted in this Volume. Price Bound 6 s.

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All three written by John Dunton, Author of this Weekly Paper, and sold by J. Morphew near Stationers's Hall.

\* \* \* The Amorous War, or a Duel with the Passions, a Poem, in a Letter to a Friend. By a Gentleman of the University of Oxford. To which is added, the Defeat, or the Love vanquish'd, and again rallying with a Smile. Sold by Thomas Darrack, Printer, in Peterborough-Court in Little-Britain, Price 2 d.

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